

REMARKS

The Office Action dated December 29, 2005, has been received and carefully noted. The amendments made herein and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 7 and 13 have been amended. Claims 11 and 17 have been canceled. The Applicants submit that the amendments made herein are fully supported in the specification and the drawings as originally filed, and therefore no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-10, 12-16 and 18 are pending in the present application.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 since this Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance for reasons discussed herein; (b) does not raise any new issue regarding further search and/or consideration since the Amendment amplifies issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) does not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally-rejected claims; and (d) places the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The Amendment is necessary because it is made in reply to arguments raised in the rejection. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Allowed Claims and Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 1-6.

Claims 11 and 17 contain allowable subject matter. Independent claims 7 and 13 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter recited in claims 11 and 17, respectively, and thus claims 7 and 13 are allowable.

Rejection of Claims 7-10, 12-16 and 18

Claims 7, 8, 12-14 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sano (U.S. Patent No. 5,182,489). In addition, claims 7-10, 12-16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0175623, hereinafter "Kim") in view of Aoki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,770,921, hereinafter "Aoki").

As mentioned above, independent claims 7 and 13 are allowable.

As claims 8-10 and 12 depend from claim 7, and claims 14-16 and 18 depend from claim 13, the Applicants submit that each of these claims incorporates the patentable aspects therein, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to the independent claims, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 1-10, 12-16 and 18 are allowable and request the prompt issuance of this application.

If for any reason, the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper has not been timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, referring to client-matter number 025789-00011.

Respectfully submitted,



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